



## DUNGEONS & LAIRS #30: OWLBEAR WOOD

**O**wlbear Wood is a Fifth Edition plug-in adventure for **four characters with an average party level (APL) of 1, 3, 5, or 8.** This document offers details for the **1st-level version.** For the full adjustments for all level ranges, sign up for the [DMDave Patreon](#). The party is tasked with traveling into a deep forest crawling with beasts, bandits, and fey to hunt down an owlbear that has been attacking nearby people and livestock.

### PLUG-IN ADVENTURE

As a plug-in adventure, the adventure content serves as drop-in material for game masters who wish to add a dungeon to a preexisting campaign or need a side quest. If you need a hook for this adventure, the full adventure contains eight possible goals for your party.

**Gold Reward** If their patron needs to further incentivize the characters, they are willing to offer a total of 500 gp per level of the adventure on successful completion of the task.

### OMERIA PLACEMENT

If you're running a campaign that takes place in DMDave's setting Omeria, you can place this adventure into any of its major deciduous forests. It fits particularly well in the forests north of the Basilisk's Spine Mountains: Vaskil Valley, Wallingiota, or Sabalona Timberlands. The forests

surrounding Tall Kuyji and Steel Church also work well, as do the forests of The Summer Land.

### RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

To run the adventure, you need the three Fifth Edition core rulebooks. If you don't have a copy, you can access a free basic ruleset from the official source.

Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location or under specific circumstances, as described in the text.

When a creature's name appears in **bold** type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block as a way of saying, "Hey, game master, make sure you get this creature's stat block ready—there's going to be an encounter!" If the stat block appears in the Appendix of this adventure, the text tells you so; otherwise, you can find the stat block in the core rulebook.

*Spells* and nonmagical equipment mentioned in the adventure are described in the core manual for players. *Magic items* are described in the core manual for game masters unless the adventure's text directs you to an item's description in the Appendix.

# OWLBEAR WOOD

The Owlbear Wood is a dense, sprawling forest filled with threats, secrets, and exploration opportunities. Many different creatures have called the forest home throughout history, and that remains true today. The ruins of long-lost elven communities, iniquitous bandit populations, ferociously territorial monsters, and magical ponds are just a few of the potential occupants of the wood. Though the forest itself is not magical, it has thus far resisted the efforts of any to tame it.

Whatever the hook that brings them into the forest, the characters must delve into its depths and engage with its occupants to track down the supposed owlbear that they have been tasked with hunting. Because this adventure takes place in an outdoor environment which relies more on overland exploration and random encounters rather than keyed encounters, this section details the features of the forest and how to manage the adventure.

## INTO THE WOOD

Have the party designate one party member as the navigator. The navigator can even be an NPC, such as a **scout** or farmer (**commoner** with Survival +4) who lives near the forest. Should they so choose, the party can switch their navigator after each navigation check they make. When the characters first enter the forest, have the navigator make a Wisdom (Survival) check. If the navigator has the Natural Explorer feature with forest as their chosen terrain type, they make this check with advantage. Each navigation check represents two hours of in-game travel time. The party spends much of this time clearing brush and navigating through winding paths.

Use the Navigation table below to determine what happens to the party based on the check's result. If the party travels deeper into the forest, roll the given number of dice to determine which area of the forest the party finds themselves via the Forest Location table. Locations marked with an asterisk can only be found if the party discovers clues that give them bonuses to the Forest Location check. Each time the characters discover a Forest Location, they must roll another Wisdom (Survival) check to continue traveling. If a roll on the Forest Location table would lead to a location the party already visited, reroll the result.

### OWLBEAR WOOD MAPS

All locations within the forest are mapped onto Forest maps of Tom Cartos' Into the Wilds series. As they do not have keyed locations in the separate areas, we have refrained from reprinting ten individual maps in this document. Instead, each location's name points to the map it references, and of course you can also find them in the digital assets pack or on [Tom Cartos' Patreon](#).

## NAVIGATION

Check Result	Outcome
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0-9	The party loses its path, travels in a rough circle, and triggers an encounter from the Random Encounters table.
10-14	The party travels deeper into the forest. Roll 1d4, then reference the Forest Location table to determine which part of the forest the characters discover.
15-24	The party travels deeper into the forest. Roll 2d4, then reference the Forest Location table to determine which part of the forest the characters discover.
25+	The party finds the owlbear cave in the heart of the forest, area 10.

## FOREST LOCATION

Check Result	Location
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1	Area 1 - Forked Path
2	Area 2 - Campsite
3	Area 3 - Lumber Camp
4	Area 4 - Wood Copse
5	Area 5 - Wood Clearing
6	Area 6 - Hermit's Cabin
7	Area 7 - Blightwoods
8	Area 8 - Elven Ruin
9	Area 9 - Satyr's Pond
10+	Area 10 - Owlbear Cave*

## CAMPING IN THE WOOD

The Owlbear Wood can be a dangerous place. Properly setting up camp is critical to getting restorative rest and avoiding the ire of the wood's other occupants. To determine how the party fare during their overnight stay in the wood, the characters must make a special group check to represent their efforts finding a good site, scouting the perimeter, preparing food, and other camp activities. The group check involves multiple individual checks, none of which are the same. Anyone can make any of these checks, but only one character can attempt each check and they can't receive help.

The party must make three checks: Intelligence (Nature), Wisdom (Survival), and an additional third check of a player's choice to represent a particular camp activity, such as a Charisma (Performance) check for fireside entertainment or a Strength (Athletics) check to help with brush clearing. The DC for each of the checks is determined by the last area of the forest through which the characters traveled, as shown on the table below.

## CAMPING DCs

Forest Area	DC
1-4	10
5-6	15
7-8	20

Once all the checks related to camping have been rolled, the party's success or failure is determined. There are three levels of success or failure, determined by the results of the party's group check. A total success occurs when every roll in the group check is a success. Two successful checks indicate a success, and two or more failed checks indicate a failure.

## CAMPING RESULTS

Result	Outcome
Failure	The party is attacked during the night. Roll on the Random Encounters table to determine the nature of the encounter.
Success	The party rests without issue.
Total Success	The party experiences a particularly restorative rest. Each party member receives one point of Inspiration.

## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Encounter	1st Level (d100)
1d4 + 2 constrictor snakes	01-10
2d4 blink dogs	11-20
1 druid	21-30
1d6 bandits	31-40
1d4 + 4 wolves	41-50
1 awakened tree	51-55
1d6 harpies	56-60
1d8 + 1 orcs	61-65
1 giant boar	66-70
2d4 hobgoblins	71-75
2d6 gnolls	76-80
1 phase spider	81-85
1d6 giant toads	85-90
1 grick	91-00

For random encounters for levels 3, 5, and 8, see the full adventure copy.



## WOOD LOCATIONS

After the characters discover a location in the forest, refer to the appropriate location below to determine what they find there.

### 1 - FORKED PATH

The interior of the wood is dense and sparsely traveled, but rough paths are maintained at the outer edges of the wood, which are often used by hunters. These paths provide good opportunities for bandits to ambush unsuspecting targets.

The rugged dirt path on which you are traveling begins to fork up ahead, several dozen feet away from you. A horse-drawn wagon lies overturned in the middle of the path before the fork, its horse absent and its ambiguous cargo spilled over the forest floor. Two men stand in front of the wagon; one waves both his arms over his head in your direction, as if to ask for help.

The overturned wagon completely blocks the path, forcing travelers to navigate around it through the dense brush. The bandits in this area target easier marks such as hunters and merchants, but aren't afraid of trying their luck against a group of adventurers.

**Encounter: Bandit Ambush.** The overturned wagon is, of course, an ambush. In addition to the two bandits standing out in the open, one bandit hides in the interior of the overturned wagon and several more have concealed themselves in the surrounding brush. The bandits attempt to stall for as long as possible in an attempt to drop the party's guard, explaining that their wagon of produce to a nearby village was overturned when their horse got spooked and violently freed itself from the wagon, tipping it over. Characters who make a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check of their surroundings notice the signs of bandits lurking in the surrounding trees. The nature of the bandits depends on the level of the adventure as shown in the table below.

#### BANDIT AMBUSH ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Creature
1st	1 thug and 2 bandits
3rd	See the full adventure
5th	See the full adventure
8th	See the full adventure

### 2 - ABANDONED CAMPSITE

The trees of the wood part to form a spacious clearing. Three tents surround a cold, smokeless campfire. Two humanoid bodies lie near the tents, the grass beneath them stained brown with blood.

This campsite belonged to a group of hunters before they were ambushed and murdered by bandits. There are three human male corpses at the campsite; two in the grass out in the open and one (who was attacked first in his sleep) in the northernmost tent. The body in the tent has had its throat slit; a DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals the other two bodies show signs of a fight and injuries consistent with piercing and slashing weapons and that the bodies are probably a few days old. The bandits who attacked the camp stripped it of anything of value. Only empty bags and the stench of death remain.

**Random Encounters.** When the characters enter this part of the wood, roll a d20. On a result of 15-20, an encounter occurs with creatures poking around the campsite. See the Random Encounters table on page 3 for details.

### 3 - LUMBER CAMP

More and more tree stumps become mingled with the surrounding brush as you work your way through the wood. Before long, much of the trees have been reduced to stumps and you can spot the distant, wood-framed buildings of what looks to be an inactive lumber camp.

This failed lumber camp was abandoned for years before a local gang of bandits began squatting in it as outlaws. Senior members of the bandit group occupy the camp's two buildings, while other lower-ranking members have set up tents on the site. The site is littered with stacks of old lumber, empty wagons, and various rusted tools.

**Encounter: Bandit Hideout.** Depending on the time of day the party approaches the camp, various members of the hideout may be sleeping or partaking in other activities such as drinking or card games. At night, the camp always has two guards posted while most of the other occupants are asleep. The nature of the bandits depends on the level of the adventure as shown in the table below.

**Treasure: Bandit Cache.** The bandits keep small amounts of loot on their persons as well as a group cache in a locked chest within the northernmost building. The chest can be opened with a successful DC 13 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check, or the chest key found on the bandit leader. To determine the chest's contents, consult the Treasure Hoard table in the DMG with a CR that corresponds with the party's level.

#### BANDIT HIDEOUT ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Creature
1st	1 thug and 6 bandits
3rd	See the full adventure
5th	See the full adventure
8th	See the full adventure

#### 4 - WOOD CLEARING

The trees of the wood momentarily break to form a spacious clearing approximately seventy-five feet across.

This forest clearing is one of the characters' first steps in the right direction, as they now find themselves deeper in the forest. So long as the party doesn't opt to leave the forest, the party's navigator adds +1 to the next Wisdom (Survival) check they make to navigate through the forest, and +1 to the next roll they make on the Forest Locations table.

**Random Encounters.** When the characters enter this part of the forest, roll a d20. On a result of 16-20, an encounter occurs. See the Random Encounters table on page 3 for details.

#### 5 - COPSE OF TREES

The trees here are denser and taller than the outskirts of the wood. You estimate that you're headed deeper toward the wood's heart.

Like the wood clearing, this copse places the characters another step closer to reaching their goal of finding the wood's center. So long as the party doesn't opt to leave the forest, the party's navigator adds +1 to the next Wisdom (Survival) check they make to navigate through the forest, and +1 to the next roll they make on the Forest Locations table.

**Random Encounters.** When the characters enter this part of the forest, roll a d20. On a result of 14-20, an encounter occurs. See the Random Encounters table on page 3 for details.

#### 6 - HERMIT'S CABIN

A lantern hangs in the doorway of this homely, single-story wood cabin deep within the forest. Smoke rises lazily from its stone chimney. A trickling stream babbles pleasantly just a few dozen feet away.

This cabin belongs to a halfling hermit named Norder (CG male halfling **spy**). Norder is a skilled hunter and survivalist, and makes his living deeper in the wood than any bandits are willing to venture. Depending on the time of day that the party approaches the cabin, Norder may be outside the property washing his clothes in the nearby stream or inside his cabin reading a book by candlelight. As long as the party does not approach Norder with violence, the halfling is outwardly friendly and explains that he is always willing to chat with travelers, considering how rare they tend to be this deep into the wood. Norder asks the party about their business and offers them tea and a hot meal. He speaks measuredly in a soothing, gravelly voice, and the gleam in his frequent smile matches the one in his bright blue eyes.

**Owlbear Clue.** If the topic of the owlbear comes up in conversation with Norder (which it should, as Norder is eager to ask the party about their intentions), the halfling can offer a clue to the owlbear's whereabouts, as he is very familiar with the wood. Explaining that he knows generally of the owlbear's presence through previous tracks it has left through the brush, he suspects the owlbear to lair within a rough general area of a few square miles deeper within the wood. So long as the party does not opt to leave the forest, the party's navigator adds a cumulative +1 to all Wisdom (Survival) checks they make to navigate through the forest, as well as a cumulative +1 to all rolls they make on the Forest Locations table. If the characters leave the forest, the bonus resets to 0.

#### 7 - BLIGHTWOODS

This area of the wood has been ravaged by fire. Brush is burned away, and the few trees still standing are gnarled, blackened husks free of canopy. A light fog hangs in the air, its presence seemingly enforced.

**Encounter: Blightwoods Guardians.** This area of the forest was cursed long ago by an angry Unseelie fey lord, who punished the druid who used to live here by burning it to the ground and promising that nothing would ever grow in the area tended to by the druid again. To help enforce this mandate, a variety of creatures loyal to the Unseelie lord patrol the area, attacking any who enter and proclaiming its forbiddance. The nature of the blightwoods guardians depends on the level of the adventure as shown on the table below.

#### BLIGHTWOODS GUARDIANS ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Creature
1st	4 magma mephits
3rd	See the full adventure
5th	See the full adventure
8th	See the full adventure



## 8 - ELVEN RUIN

An altar is mounted on a circular stepped dais in the middle of this clearing. The dais is surrounded by crumbling pillars suggestive of ancient elven architecture. Faint, indecipherable whispers are carried on the air.

This altar was built centuries ago by a small faction of wood elves. It is all that remains of their presence after they were forced out of the wood by Unseelie fey through violent force. The spirits of elves slain in the wood linger at this site. If the characters approach the altar, the spectral form of an elf appears and explains that the party treads on sacred land; it asks what business they have in the forest and demands that they offer a prayer of worship to the elven deity of the wood at the altar. The outcome of any prayers depends on the result of the characters' Wisdom (Religion or History) check as shown on the table below.

### PRAYER RESULTS

DC	Prayer Result
5 or lower	The spirits are angered by the prayer and attack. Refer to the Encounter: Elven Spirits section below.
6-10	The elves are satisfied by the prayer. The spirits disappear and let the party continue onward.
11-15	The spirits are pleased by the prayer. They can offer the party directions towards the owlbear's location. Refer to the Owlbear Clue section below.
16+	The elves are impressed by the knowledge and reverence of the prayer. The party receives the benefits of the <i>bless</i> spell until they leave the wood.

**Encounter: Elven Spirits.** If the party offers an offensive prayer or refuses to pray at all, the spirits of the elves attack. The exact nature of the spirits depends on the adventure's level as shown on the table below.

### ELVEN SPIRITS ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Creature
1st	1 <b>specter</b>
3rd	See the full adventure
5th	See the full adventure
8th	See the full adventure

**Owlbear Clue.** If the party explains its goals and offers a pleasing prayer to the elves, the spirits can help guide the party to the owlbear's location. So long as the party does not opt to leave the forest, the party's navigator adds a cumulative +2 to all Wisdom (Survival) checks they make to navigate through the forest, as well as a cumulative +2 to all rolls they make on the Forest Locations table. If the characters leave the forest, the bonus resets to 0.

## 9 - SATYR'S POND

Characters with a passive Perception of 12 or higher can hear faint flute music as they approach this area. The music gets louder the closer they get to the pond. When they come within sight of it, read aloud:

The trees of the wood part to reveal a small pond of sparkling water that is almost impossibly blue. A creature with the head and torso of a man but the lower body of a goat sits on a small island in the middle of the pond playing the flute, a mischievous smile splayed across his face.

The creature sitting on the island is a **satyr** native to the plane of fey named Qed. The pond is a crossing that can be used to travel between the plane of fey and the Material Plane. Qed keeps loose supervision of the crossing and the surrounding wood. He asks the party their business, and explains that he can help them find what they're looking for if they can join him in making beautiful music. To appease Qed, a character must make a successful DC 12 Charisma (Performance) check to sing a melody in harmony with Qed's flute playing. Each member of the party may only attempt this check once. Upon success, Qed can offer precise directions to the owlbear's lair as well as information on the level of threat the party is up against, depending on the adventure's level (see the appropriate table in the Owlbear Lair section below).

**Owlbear Clue.** If the party agrees to offer Qed songs in exchange for information and is successful in their performance, Qed provides the party with general directions to the cave in which he knows the owlbear dwells, as he is an expert on the wood and its inhabitants. So long as the party does not opt to leave the forest, the party's navigator adds a cumulative +3 to all Wisdom (Survival) checks they make to navigate through the forest, as well as a cumulative +3 to all rolls they make on the Forest Locations table. If the characters leave the forest, the bonus resets to 0.

## 10 - OWLBEAR LAIR

A rock knoll marked with a yawning cave mouth fills the center of this forest clearing. The surrounding brush is well-tread.

The owlbear that the party is hunting lairs here in this small cave. The interior of the cave itself is littered with various carcasses picked clean.

**Encounter: Owlbear Lair.** Depending on what time the party approaches the lair, its occupants may or may not be asleep. If the party makes a successful group Dexterity (Stealth) check against the occupants' passive Perception, its occupants are surprised. Depending on the adventure's level, the party may be surprised to find that there is more than one owlbear that has been active in the wood. The nature of the lair's occupants are shown on the table below.

## OWLBEAR LAIR ENCOUNTER

### Adventure Level

### Creature

1st	1 injured <b>owlbear</b> with 40 hit points and an AC of 11
3rd	See the full adventure
5th	See the full adventure
8th	See the full adventure

**Treasure: Carcass Ring.** A character who makes a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check of the cave's interior notices a ring still worn by a dismembered finger lying against the east wall. The ring is a *ring of animal influence*.

**Hook Resolutions.** If the characters came here looking for an owlbear egg, the swallowed trinket, or the Fellowship's agent, they will find it here. A single egg lies in a nest and can be transported back, assuming it wasn't damaged by an area effect during the fight. The agent is an NG female human **druid** with no spell slots left and deep wounds lying unconscious against the back wall.

## AFTERMATH

As long as the characters make it to the owlbear lair and kill or capture them, the faction that hired them will gladly pay the agreed upon price. Both the woods themselves and the surrounding areas are made safer by the removal of the monstrosity. Possibly, the party also dealt with the bandit group setting ambushes for travelers, or cleansed some of the blighted and haunted parts of the forest.

Depending on the actions of the party, the events of their owlbear hunt may lead to other adventures later on. If they only defeated some of the bandits, the rest of them may come after the party to take revenge. If they visited the blightwoods, the party might look for ways to restore them to their natural state. And if they found Qed and his pond, there is always the possibility that they step through the portal into the plane of fey. Ω

## CREDITS

The following creators made this adventure possible:

**Design and Writing.** DMDave and Alexander LeFort

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